

Explicit censorship by the government is not the only threat to a free press, which is the backbone of democracy. Just as surely, unchecked media consolidation can silence the diversity of voices that form this backbone.

DO NOT ALTER THE OWNERSHIP RULES to allow further consolidation in the media industry.

Some frightening examples of how media consolidation already effects us:

- Radio giant Clear Channel Communications, which owns 60% of all radio stations in the country, sponsored 18 pro-war "Rally for America!" events and many of its stations pulled the Dixie Chicks from their lineups after the band spoke out against the President. Thomas Hicks, the investment banker primarily responsible for Clear Channel's rapid growth over the past 5 years, has close ties to President Bush.

- Members of Congress say that they aren't hearing their constituents speak up on this issue - they're only hearing the lobbyists paid by the media companies. This is a chilling (but not surprising) sign, since the big media companies have provided little coverage of this issue, which affects their own bottom line. 72% of respondents in a recent poll said they had "heard nothing at all" about the new ownership proposals.  
(<http://journalism.org/resources/research/reports/fccsurvey/default.asp>)

- ABC News pulled the plug on an investigative piece that contended its parent company, Disney had failed to thoroughly check the backgrounds of employees at its theme parks, which resulted in the hiring of alleged paedophiles. A few days before, Michael Eisner told NPR that ABC news should not report on its parent company.  
([http://www.pbs.org/now/transcript/transcript\\_bigmedia.html](http://www.pbs.org/now/transcript/transcript_bigmedia.html))

Conflicts of interest between journalistic integrity and the financial interests of parent conglomerates will continue. Deregulating media consolidation will not serve the FCC's mission to protect the public interest.